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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 003366

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PRM, NEA/I, AND NEA/ELA, GENEVA FOR RMA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/22/2018

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: ACTING A/S WITTEN ENCOURAGES JORDAN TO GRANT IRAQI

REFUGEES ACCESS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for reasons 1.4 b and d

[¶1.](#) (SBU) In his meeting with Foreign Minister Salah Al Bashir on November 19, PRM Acting A/S Witten raised the issue of increased residence and employment rights for Iraqis in Jordan. Witten told the FM that the USG wanted to see Iraqis have access to residence status, work permits, and vocational training in Jordan. The FM listened to Witten's points without interruption, and responded that he knew these things were USG concerns. He explained the GOJ position that Iraqis seeking refuge in Jordan could not work legally, adding that this was not his area of responsibility.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) Acting A/S Witten also raised the possibility of processing Palestinian refugees from Iraq through Jordan for resettlement in the U.S. The Minister at first reacted negatively, saying, "Who would be responsible for them if they did not return to their camp?" He then moderated his initial reaction when Witten explained that, while details of such a proposal were still being worked out, the refugees would be brought to Amman in small groups for processing. More details on this subject to follow septel.

[¶3.](#) (C) Comment: Post continues to raise this issue with the GOJ. The Ambassador broached the subjects of vocational education and the right to work with the PM on December 20. Details of that meeting will be reported septel. End comment.

[¶4.](#) (U) This message has been coordinated with Acting A/S Witten.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman>
Beecroft